

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

November 19th, 2001

FACILITATOR'S NOTES ON FUTURE ACTIONS

Facilitator: Donna Silverberg

The following notes are a summary of issues that are intended to point out future actions or issues that may need further discussion at upcoming meetings. These notes are not intended to be the "record" of the meeting, only a reminder for TMT members.

An **emergency TMT conference call was held Monday, November 19th**, to revisit the decision made November 15th regarding chum operations. Some TMT members felt that given new information, the decision to operate at a tailwater of 11.5' at Hamilton Creek needed more thorough discussion. Paul Wagner of NMFS felt that newly observed and gathered data prompted a new recommendation. He was concerned that if the tailwater increased to 11.5', redds would be placed in elevations that could not be sustained through the season.

Shane Scott reported that he had spoken with the Washington field crew, who observed 80 chum and 35 redds in the Hamilton Creek area. Fish were spawning at the edge of the water. WFWD and NMFS were concerned that redds might be attracted to water levels that may not be sustainable through development, which could result in dewatering. A recommendation was made to decrease the tailwater level to 11', continue to observe data and, if warranted, increase flows to cover Hamilton Creek redds. The operating range would be 11 – 11.2' from 6 am to 5 pm, with any necessary increase occurring from 5 pm to midnight. The recommendation was also to maintain a consistent level as much as possible.

Donna Silverberg asked the representatives on the phone (Washington, NMFS, USFWS, BOR, BPA and COE) if anyone opposed the new recommendation. USFWS opposed any deviation from the previously agreed-upon SOR due to insufficient data. They do not believe the change is in the best interest of the chum. They are concerned that going below 11.5' will decrease the amount of habitat and therefore lead to too many fish spawning in a small, concentrated area. They wanted to see comparative data and specific spawning locations before any change is acceptable. Dave Wills proposed that, since the new recommendation was a deviation from last week's SOR, it was the responsibility of the rest of the group to raise the issue to IT. The policy issue could be whether to begin the operation at higher levels and drop down or start at lower levels and increase as necessary. Some TMT members opposed raising the issue to IT, noting the time frame in which the decision needed to be made. If the water level is raised to 11.5 before the decision is made, then the risk of dewatering redds becomes a reality sooner than later. Dave Wills then offered to pose the question to IT, which he would write up and send to TMT members before sending it out to IT. Donna suggested that the rest of TMT draft

their new recommendation and present it to IT as well so they have a complete understanding of the issues.

Further discussion led the group to a new interim agreement. They agreed to implement the new “SOR” and revisit the issue at a face-to-face meeting Wednesday morning, November 21st at 9:00 am. In the meantime, they will gather more data (including photos, maps and information from the Washington field crew) and draft a written document of the new request with justifications to be presented at the TMT meeting.

ACTION: Paul Wagner will write the new SOR and justifications and send it out to TMT members before the next meeting.

ACTION: Shane Scott will gather updated data from the Washington field crew at Hamilton Creek.

ACTION: Dave Wills will bring a large map of the area for TMT members to use in their discussion of data.

ACTION: All TMT members will brief their IT representatives on the issue at hand and alert them to the possibility of an IT meeting.

ACTION: Donna Silverberg will notify IT chair Jim Ruff of the possible meeting.

If the group is unable to reach consensus on the issue, it will be raised to IT at 1:00 on November 20th. Until then, the new recommendation (operating the tailwater at 11 – 11.2’) will be initiated, beginning Tuesday, November 20th, at 6:00 am.

USFWS reluctantly and in good faith agreed to the process that was decided on during this meeting. While they have significant concerns with the proposal, they agreed to work with the group to try to reach a mutually acceptable resolution.